

Myrtle Village Neighborhood Meeting
Monday, October 21, 2013
7:00 PM
Myrtle Baptist Church

Presentation: Myrtle Village PowerPoint
Poster Board with Myrtle Village Site Drawings
Q&A Session

Attendance List: , omitted to protect attendees' privacy

Question: What is AMI?

Shelby [Robinson] responded that AMI is Area Median Income. Bob explained that each year the state sets the area median income for 1 – 8 family member households and that Newton uses the Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area in determining the AMI. Bob [Engler] further explained that at least 25% of the units must be set aside for occupants that are 80% or below the AMI and that all of the occupants at Myrtle Village will have incomes at 50 – 85% of AMI. As a non-profit, Myrtle Village LLC seeks to create as much affordability as possible.

Question: How many parking spaces will there be?

Shelby responded that there will be 1 HP space and 2 short term drop-off/pick up spaces on site and an additional 10 parking spaces in the church parking lot. It was later amended that there will be an additional 12 spaces in the lot rather than the 10 previously reported.

Question: What are CPA funds?

Bob responded that it is the Community Preservation Act funds and briefly explained the history of the CPA in Newton and the funding approval process.

Question: Who will live at Myrtle Village and will there be a Newton preference?

Bob explained that there will be a lottery and that Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF) will administer the lottery. While 70% of the units can be set aside for local preference, it is expected that the three current households will relocate to the new units and therefore only one of the four remaining units will have local preference. During the lottery, the remaining applicants in the local preference pool will be added to the all other pool. It was questioned what the application process would entail and both Bob and Shelby responded that references would be checked and CORI backgrounds obtained and that NCDF would manage the process.

Question: Who is the LLC?

Shelby reported that at this time she is the sole manager of the LLC.

Question: Will these new units have an impact on the plans for the site on Crescent Street?

Shelby responded that as of now there are no definitive plans for Crescent Street and that Crescent Street is not part of Myrtle Village.

Question: Where is Myrtle Village in the process?

Shelby responded that the Planning and Development Board will hold a joint public hearing with the Community Preservation Committee on Monday, November 4th at 7:30 PM at the Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville and encouraged everybody to attend. Bob explained that it is expected these two committees will recommend funding and that the next step in the process will be a hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals and another with the Aldermen. This process might take up to 10 months and therefore it is expected that the project may not go out to bid for a year to a year and a half. Howard [Haywood] spoke about the prior process Myrtle Village went through during the original proposal submission.

Question: How will the development be maintained?

Bob explained that NCDF will be the property managers and briefly reviewed the income and expenses and explained that there will be routine repairs and additional funds for reserves. Shelby reported that the full Myrtle Village proposal application, including budgets is on the City of Newton website.

Question: What benefits is the Church getting?

Shelby responded that the Church will receive nothing other than the ability to provide much needed affordable housing. If any income is generated it is expected to go back into the property.

Question: Who is managing the current units?

Shelby stated: Myrtle Baptist Church.

Question: Is there affordable housing that is for sale rather than rental?

Shelby explained that affordable housing encompasses both home ownership and rental units but Myrtle Village will be rental units only.

Question: Why not make this property affordable for sale rather than rental units?

Shelby responded that the church felt it was best to develop this property as rental units given the needs of the community.

Question: Will the property be just like Warren House only on a smaller scale?

The gentleman posing this question reported that he lives in the neighborhood and has been pleased with Warren House as a neighbor. He reported that it is well maintained and that he and his children use the fields. Bob responded that the only difference would be that there will be many less units and all of the units at Myrtle Village will be affordable whereas some of the units at Warren House are market rental.

Question: What about the other developers that come along and want to build?

There were concerns that while this project is only an additional 4 units, other developers will come and propose 7 units here, 20 units there which will ultimately impact density. Bob stated that the impact on traffic and schools is typically minimal with smaller developments and also stated that Newton has to grow and that there needs to be more affordable housing available. Rev. Howard Haywood reminded those in attendance about the number of additional houses that were in that area originally before they were lost through eminent domain when the Mass Pike was constructed.

Bob commented that 4 additional units would have little impact but acknowledged that in the future there could be developments that will impact the density and traffic, but those needed to be addressed to the City when future developments are being proposed.

Comments: There was concern expressed about Prospect Street being a one way during the morning hours and how it should have never been changed to a one way because now the traffic is worse. Parents drop off at the Little Peoples School and park on Prospect Street necessitating her employees to park on Curve Street and now with Myrtle Village there will be additional traffic in the morning.

Shelby responded that since the expectation is that the 3 tenants who live in 12 and 18-20 Curve Street will remain as tenants at Myrtle Village, it is really only the impact of 4 additional units.